PERSONAL COURAGE IN THE KOREAN WAR

In Korea during September 1950 as American soldiers were retreating south, many were captured along with civilian missionaries. These westerners were herded together and forced to march long distances with no attention to their wounds and little if any food or water.

On one such march a group consisting of soldiers and Christian workers were told not to allow anyone to drop out of the column, even if they died. When people did drop out, some dead, the north Korean major in charge demanded to know who was responsible for his orders not being followed, and threatened to shoot them all. From the column stepped Lieutenant Cordus Thornton who said he was responsible for the people dropping out. Thornton explained, to make the survivors carry the dead was to condemn them to death as well. In an act of moral courage, Lieutenant Thornton was accepting responsibility. The North Korean major acted as expected.

They tied a cloth around Thornton's eyes then the major lifted the flap of the pile cap, shoved his pistol to the young lieutenant's head and pulled the trigger.

An American NCO dragged the lieutenant to the side of the road and began digging a grave with a stick. Others joined in, some using only their hands until they had a shallow grave into which they laid Cordus Thornton. The march and atrocities continued.

Source: Maihafer, Harry J. *Brave Decisions*, pp. 192-3

GENERAL GAVIN – A MAN OF HONOR

The career of Lieutenant General James M. "Jumping Jim" Gavin was outstanding. He began his service to the Army as a private and rose through the ranks on the basis of ability and drive to be a three star general. He led the 82nd Airborne Division through some of its toughest fighting in World War II.

At the pinnacle of his career, with a fourth star and probable selection as the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Gavin suddenly retired. The crux of his decision to end his illustrious career was bound up in this notion of **HONOR**. As a senior member of the Army team, he was bound to support the leadership. If he in all good conscience disagreed with policy, he had only two honorable choices -- resign or support.

General Gavin honorably chose the former. The news hit the Army with the impact of a major caliber round, and most Army personnel who know the general were saddened that so notable a talent would leave on the brink of the crowning achievement of his career.

Today in a world that believes in expediency, General Gavin's honorable gesture would be ridiculed. In the so-called Me Generation, all that counts is getting ahead. If General Gavin were alive today and in the same position, he could have just kept quiet with his views and changed the whole situation when he became Chief of Staff. But Gavin came from the old school that still believed "honor" was important. His entire life had been bound up in this notion.

The one individual that Gavin had to in the end account for his actions was Gavin HIMSELF. He could not stand by and see the Army adopt a doctrine he thought wrong. But to undermine the position from within was not honorable. The only way he could live with himself was to retire first, and then speak out. It was certainly not an easy choice. But it was a most honorable one.

GEORGE MARSHALL – DUTY PERSONIFIED

In the history of this nation and its Army, the Army has never had so fine a Chief of Staff as General George C. Marshall. While others were content to merely hope for the best in the late 1930s, he began preparing the Army for a war he knew he knew was coming – World War II. His major strength lay in his administrative ability and dedication to **DUTY** above all else.

When it came time for selection of the major Allied ground commander in Europe, General Marshall hoped that he would be given the opportunity to lead in battle the largest assemblage of U.S. military personnel -- Army, Navy, and Air Force – ever in the history of this nation. It would have been the final achievement in an already stellar career. However, President Roosevelt selected General Dwight D. Eisenhower for the job.

Those who knew Marshall best described him as deeply disappointed. He had wanted the job badly, and his experience and expertise would have no doubt made him a great Allied Commander. But President Roosevelt did not want Marshall to leave Washington because, as the President said, "I don't sleep well when you are out of town." As a good soldier, and a man who had dedicated nearly 40 years of his life to duty, Marshall hid his deep disappointment and soldiered on.

When President Truman needed a Secretary of Defense and later Secretary of State, Marshall again saw that it was his duty to accept the President's mandate. During his stint as the Secretary of State, Marshall was in poor health, but he did his duty throughout with no thought of shirking. If one wants an epitome of what "duty" really is, he or she should look no further than George Catlett Marshall.

CIVIL WAR STYLE RESPECT

Major General Joshua Chamberlain is best remembered for his epic stand with the 20th Maine at Little Round Top on 2 July 1863, during the battle of Gettysburg. But he should be remembered for another act -- one of **RESPECT**.

When Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House in April 1865, the normal surrender terms called for the defeated army – that is, Lee's troops – to turn in their weapons and battle flags by passing down a corridor of the victorious Union ranks.

The general selected to command the Federal troops in this ceremony was General Chamberlain. Picked to lead the defeated Confederate troops in this surrender ceremony was the oft-wounded Major General John B. Gordon (Gordon was wounded five times at the Battle of Antietam alone). Behind him marched a column of some 25,000 gray-clad veterans preparing to stack arms for the last time.

Chamberlain was not a professional soldier, nor a graduate of West Point. In point of fact, he was a college professor from Bowdin College. Yet he had the soul of a warrior, and had been wounded -- twice severely -- during the war while leading attacks. He had fought often against the very men moving toward him at that moment. He had seen them fight in the Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, North Anna, and at Petersburg. He knew them to be brave and noble adversaries, but their defeat now had taken away their pride.

Something stirred within the warrior's side of Chamberlain. He respected their valor. But was prohibited by order from a direct show of respect. So as the Confederates approached, he ordered his men to simply "carry arms" -- not present arms, which would have been a show of respect. General Gordon, whose head was down in defeat and shame, noticed the Union troops obeying Chamberlain's order; and took it for what it was -- a show of **RESPECT**.

He turned to his men and spoke a few words, and Lee's veterans smartened up, closed ranks, held their heads high – even in defeat. Chamberlain's simple act of soldierly respect was much appreciated, and was a first step in healing the nation's wounds.

QUARTERMASTER LOYALTY AT KHE SANH

Vietnam was America's longest war. One of the most bitterly fought battles during that war was the famous Siege of Khe Sanh. Toward the end of 1966, numerous large scale North Vietnamese units began consolidating around the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North from South Vietnam. The Commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, ordered Marine units northward – into a string of fire support bases just south of the DMZ. One of those bases was Khe Sanh.

All during 1967, Marines continued moving in to reinforce the tiny outpost. By January 1968 over 6,000 Allied troops were on hand – dug in, ready to fight. But U.S. intelligence reports indicated that some 15-20,000 NVA soldiers had them surrounded, virtually cut off from the outside world. The siege had begun.

At approximately 0530 hours on 21 January 1968, Communist gunners began hitting the camp with hundreds of rounds of rockets, mortars, and artillery fire. One of the incoming rounds scored a direct hit on the camp's main ordnance dump – destroying nearly 1,500 tons of ordnance in a few minutes. The marines immediately requested an emergency resupply of ammo. But the only way in was by airdrop.

Members of the 109th Quartermaster Company (Aerial Delivery) began around-the-clock operations. Quartermaster riggers loaded C-123s and delivered over 130 tons of supplies during the next 36 hours – even flying and unloading at night by the light of Marine artillery flares. The operation became even more perilous as NVA antiaircraft guns opened fire. Between January and April 1968, when the siege was finally broken, QM riggers delivered nearly 12,500 tons of supplies, without which the Marines could never have survived.

There were many Quartermaster heroes during that tense period, as the country looked on. One such hero was **SPEC 4 CHARLES BANEY,** a 20-year-old parachute rigger, whose C-130 crashed, killing him and all others on board during a low altitude supply drop at Khe Sahn. Specialist Baney's **LOYALTY** to those trapped on the ground below places him in the finest tradition of a QM soldier supporting victory.

RESPECT FOR DEAD AT NORMANDY

In the months leading up to 6 June 1944 – D-Day, the date set for the World War II Normandy Invasion – tens of thousands of American GIs poured into England, and awaited last minute preparations before crossing the English Channel. In all, more than 100,000 Allied soldiers were to be landed on the beaches of Normandy by the end of the first day. If successful, millions more would follow. The invasion was to begin with a massive aerial assault by paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Dropped behind enemy lines to secure vital roads and communication centers. Some would parachute. Others would go in in gliders.

The 4th Platoon, 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company was assigned directly to the 82nd Airborne. But none of these GR specialists had yet been jump qualified. So the plan was for them to join in the seaborne assault, and come ashore no earlier than D+1 or 2. One of the specialists, Sergeant Elbert Legg, voiced the opinion that someone from the 603rd probably ought to go in on the initial assault. He, having been the one to mention it, was promptly "volunteered" for the mission.

A few days later, on June 1st, Sergeant Legg moved in with the combat troops and briefly familiarized himself with large wooden, Horsa-type glider that would carry his small group across the channel. Late in the evening on June 5th the air base where he was staying came alive with furious activity – lines forming, last minute checks, everyone getting in position. The invasion was on!

Planes departed throughout the night. Many never returned. And it became clear to Legg that this was the real thing. Hours later it was his turn. Into the glider they went. Eerie silence marked most of their journey – over the water, the coastline, past German defenses, the infamous French hedgerows, to the clearing beyond. His glider ("Number 32") was cut loose and down she went, crash-landing in an open field.

Discovering he was OK, Sergeant Legg wasted no time setting up a collection point, and immediately began receiving the dead. More bodies followed. Then more. By the end of the first week nearly 350 American soldiers had been buried in the temporary cemetery at Blosville. Nearly 6,000 by the end of June.

Sergeant Legg is a vivid reminder that American soldiers take care of their own, that they habitually treat with **RESPECT** their comrades in arms – both the living and the dead.

HONOR PRESERVED AT CORREGEDOR

On 8 December 1941, within hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces turned their full fury on Clark Field in the Philippines. Unable to wage an effective counterattack, the American commander, General Douglas MacArthur, ordered his 76,000 American and Filipino forces to consolidate on the Bataan Peninsula. There they would attempt to at least slow the Japanese advance and hold out as long as possible.

Over the next three and a half months the Allies continued digging in on Bataan and neighboring Corregedor. Completely cut off from the outside world, Quartermasters of the 12th Quartermaster Regiment fought like heroes to the bitter end – in a losing battle to keep their meager supplies from running out.

They died in the debris of warehouses and repair shops under merciless shelling and bombing. They fed our troops from hopelessly inadequate food supplies. They slaughtered water buffaloes for meat, and in the last desperate days resorted to killing horses and pack mules. Built fish traps and distilled sea water from salt.

And in coffee pots made from oil drums they boiled and reboiled the tiny coffee supply until the grounds were white. So long as an ounce of food existed, it was used. More important, they delivered right to the foxholes, if necessary – fighting and dying as they went. When Bataan and later Corregador fell, members of the 12th QM Regiment were prominent among the 7,000 American and Filipino victims who died on the 65-mile long infamous Death March.

Though captured, their honor remained firmly intact. One of the nurses with the 12th QM, Lieutenant Beulah Greenwalt, very courageously wrapped the regimental colors around her, and convinced her Japanese captors that it was "only a shawl." For the next 33 months, Lieutenant Greenwalt remained a prisoner of war with the other nurses in Manila, lived on a starvation diet and was denied all comforts. But through it all she held on to the flag – the regimental colors.

When the war ended in 1945, and the surviving POWs were released, Lieutenant Greenwalt sought out and found the Regimental Commander, and presented him with the flag she had protected and cherished all that time. Both recognized the deed for what it was – a clear demonstration of **HONOR**.

JESUP A LIVING EXAMPLE OF INTEGRITY

For more than four decades during the last century Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup served as The Quartermaster General of the Army. Known as the "Father of the Quartermaster Corps," he was also a man of unshakable character and **INTEGRITY**. He had a habit of doing the right thing *because it was the right thing to do*.

As a brand new lieutenant in 1809, Jesup was appointed brigade quartermaster on the Mississippi frontier, under the command of Brigadier General James Wilkinson. General Wilkinson had a somewhat unsavory reputation. And it was perhaps inevitable that the principled young lieutenant would eventually clash with his rather unscrupulous commander. That's exactly what happened in the summer of 1811.

While stationed at a cantonment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Lieutenant Jesup got permission from Secretary of War William Eustis to come to Washington to settle his quartermaster accounts. However, by the time he actually arrived in the nation's capitol months later, Jesup was informed by a War Department accountant that he would be personally charged for an item that rightly should have been charged to General Wilkinson.

The sum in question only amounted to $79.00. Still Jesup was incensed. Why should a junior officer be forced to pay for a senior officer's wasteful excesses – even if the latter happened to be a commanding general. Knowing this to be unfair, he referred the matter directly to the Secretary of War. General Eustis must have been impressed with Jesup's logic, tenacity, and fundamental honesty, for he quickly sided in his favor.

When, in 1818, by then Colonel Jesup was appointed The Quartermaster General of the Army, he drafted a Code of Conduct for the Quartermaster Department that adhered to the highest standards of integrity and accountability. Until the day he died – some 42 years later -- he encouraged others, through precept and example, to follow those same high standards.